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ABSTRACT

A well-ordered classroom promotes learning, helps build a classroom community, and frees teachers to observe and interact with children in positive ways. This videotape shows how classroom and outdoor environments can convey six positive messages for preschool children: (1) this is a good place to be; (2) you belong here as a valued member of the community; (3) this is a place you can trust; (4) there are places you can be by yourself when you want to be; (5) you can do many things on your own; and (6) this is a safe place to explore and try out your ideas. The 24-minute videotape is organized by these messages to identify specific strategies teachers can use to create a positive and supportive environment for children. A combination of videotape footage of children in real classrooms and still photographs are used to illustrate several strategies, including: (1) dividing the classroom into distinct interest areas so children can have clear choices and can work in small groups; (2) locating quiet interest areas away from noisier ones; (3) placing interest areas near needed resources; (4) making each area attractive and inviting; (5) storing materials that go together in the same place; (6) using special containers to hold materials with small pieces; (7) displaying materials so they are accessible to and organized for children; (8) including materials that are familiar to children; (9) providing materials that encourage children to explore and discover; (10) making literacy materials available in all areas; (11) and adapting the environment so that all children can participate in classroom activities as fully as possible. An accompanying booklet outlines workshops to use as the videotape is shown to staff and families; a transcript of the video is included. Workshop directions suggest ways to introduce the topic, focus viewers' attention as they watch the video, and provide opportunities for participants to apply the information to their own settings. Two appendices contain a form for identifying the messages conveyed in an environment, and a community survey. (KB)

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